

**DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2016
ROOM 400
TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT**

CALL TO ORDER: 4:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE:

DRAC: Jeffrey Gebrian, Chair; Members: Sheldon Crosby, Gordon Binkhorst, Fred Fritz, Richard Hughes; and Alternate: Kimberly Parsons-Whitaker.

Staff: Todd Dumais, Town Planner; Catherine Dorau, Associate Planner; Brittany Bermingham, Planning Technician

STUDY SESSION:

- 1. 503-511 New Park Avenue - Study session preparatory to the submission of an amendment to SDD #94, West Hartford Place, for a new Chick-Fil-A restaurant with drive-up window. (Initial DRAC Study Session on November 30, 2015. Additional study session on January 20, 2016.)*

Todd Dumais, Town Planner briefly explained that the applicant made several changes to the building architecture and site plan responsive to previous DRAC and staff comments. He introduced Josh Swerling, P.E. from Bohler Engineering to discuss these changes.

Mr. Swerling acknowledged receiving review comments from the Town Planner and handed out revised elevation and site plans that he believed were responsive. These changes involved moving the dumpster location, modifying the drive thru entrance, landscape changes, moving the outdoor dining area to the south side of the building and building elevation modifications. Mr. Dumais requested the applicant consider additional windows along the south and east side of the building as well as additional awnings. The revised plans showed these changes with additional glazed windows added as well as the additional awnings. A low brick knee wall was added to the outdoor dining area as a barrier to the traffic along New Park Avenue.

There was discussion about the lighting on the building and the various finishes of the awning supports. The awnings over the windows will be louvered and will be solid awnings over the doors. The signage will have internally LED lighting and no strip lighting. A pylon sign was briefly discussed and it was the DRAC's overall opinion that what signage they currently show on the building is sufficient. The outdoor dining lighting was discussed and the DRAC asked the applicant to look at that element for 'evening' dining. They wondered if the lighting was sufficient given no additional lighting was shown in the outdoor dining area other than what was on the building and the street lighting. The applicant agreed to look at that element.

Overall the DRAC was appreciative of the changes the applicant's team presented and complimented them for an overall nice job. The applicant would move to the next step in the application process with the Town which would require an SDD application.

REFERRAL FROM TOWN PLANNER:

2. **550-552 New Park Avenue**- Application (SP #1285) on behalf of the owner, Kim Mai, to redevelop two parcels located at 550 and 552 New Park Avenue. The site plan proposes the construction of a new two-story retail building and expansion and reconfiguration of existing parking areas and driveways. (Planning Division receipt on December 18, 2015. DRAC receipt on January 20, 2016.)

Mr. Dumais explained this application was a Site Plan, administrative level approval process. Kim Mai was represented by David Elias, the Project Architect. Mr. Elias presented various revisions to the elevations but no site plan layout.

The DRAC questioned several of the design elements to the building – especially the parapet, roof design, entrances, and asked the applicant to rethink the concept of the type of roof. Also discussed was the adjoining portion of the building connected to the existing salo and the HVAC and hood exhaust venting. The DRAC requested consideration of screening of any roof or ground mechanicals.

The Town Planner mentioned there were several recent modifications to some buildings along Farmington Avenue (east of the center) that might give the architect some direction or sense of similar building types and forms to consider. The DRAC suggested making a break in the transition point of the building connections and raising the parapet. It was suggested to contact the Building Department regarding H/C accessibility to the 2nd floor from the 1st floor (use) regarding whether there would be any Building Code implications.

There are outstanding comments from the planning office that require a revised site plan and building elevation changes. The Town Planner commented that he would refer any revised plans to the DRAC for additional review comments.

REFERRAL FROM TOWN COUNCIL:

3. **747 and 777 North Main Street** - Application (SDD #143-R1-15) on behalf of the owner, DHR North Main Street, LLC (“DHR”), to amend Special Development District plan #143 at 747 and 777 North Main Street. The amendment proposes modifications to the retaining walls, landscape plan, reconfiguration of the parking area, and relocation of the dumpster and transformer pad. (Town Council receipt on December 10, 2015. Town Council public hearing scheduled for January 26, 2016. DRAC receipt on January 20, 2016.) **DRAC recommended approval. Motion/Crosby; Second/Fritz (Vote: 5-0) Binkhorst abstained.**

Mr. Dumais explained this was a Special Development District and there were some changes to the location of the retaining wall, parking, and landscaping.

the field, which at that time, seemed to be improvements over the approved plan and were implemented. When these changes were discussed with the Town Planner they were notified they needed to file a new application to the Town Council to approve these changes.

The modification included were to the retaining wall, landscape plan, reconfiguration of the parking area, and relocation of the dumpster and transformer pad. The owners reached out to the direct abutter most impacted and planted 15 arborvitaes on their property. They said the abutter was pleased with the changes. Dian Barnes, of Landscape Design presented the changes to the plantings identifying where trees had to be moved based on the parking reconfiguration and placement of the retaining wall. Small hydrangeas and junipers are to be placed between the abutter's fence and the proposed fence at the top of the retaining wall – which were explained to be low growing and have little maintenance. The applicant stated they preferred to use welded wire fence in at the top of the retaining wall instead of the four (4) ft. chain link fence.

DRAC regarded the changes as positive and concluded it works and is functional. The DRAC would like to add that while these changes appear to be positive, they feel that asking prior to approval should not be a policy.

REVIEW OF DRAC ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2015 – Approved 6-0. Motion:
Crosby/Second:Fritz

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

- December 16, 2015 **Approved 5-0. Motion Binkhorst/Second:Fritz**

ADJOURNMENT: 5:50 P.M.

C: Ron Van Winkle, Town Manager
Patrick Alair, Deputy Corporation Counsel

Mark McGovern, Director of Community Services
Essie Labrot, Town Clerk

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